Immediately after the attacks on September 11, 2001, call volume in central and northern New Jersey rendered local telephone service inoperative for part of the day and rendered long distance, Internet, and cellular telephone access inoperative for most of the day.

Essential emergency communications to coordinate the response to the attacks that day between the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) in Trenton, NJ and the corresponding agencies of the State of New York in Albany, NY and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg, PA was dependent on the 3.5 MHz (80 Meter) and 7 MHz (40 meter) Amateur Radio bands. The 3.5 MHz band was also used to link the various county Emergency Operating Centers (EOC) in NJ with NJOEM. Other HF frequencies were used to link NJOEM with FEMA in Washington, DC.

I have now been able to review the results from the ARRL’s monitoring of the HF interference being generated by the BPL demonstration project in Emmaus, PA. If those BPL generated noise levels had been present near the HF receivers on September 11th, those essential communications could not have taken place. More people might have died.

I have over thirty years experience in establishing, supporting and operating emergency communications systems in support of the US Military and government Emergency Management operations. No terrestrial communications system is foolproof, which is why HF communication is always needed as a back up. Destroying the usefulness of the HF spectrum by allowing BPL to proceed when non-polluting broadband access methods are available would not only be foolhardy, but detrimental to security of the nation and potentially life-threatening to our citizens during times of emergency.